

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

KING,

AT THE

Royal Chapel at St. James's,

ON

Christmas-Day, 1717.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
EDWARD Lord Bishop of Coventry,
and Lichfield.

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L O N D O N.

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KING

CHRISTIANITY

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT

LONDON



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JOHN i, ver. 14.

And the Word was made Flesh--



THE three other Evange-
lists, record the Descent of
Christ according to the
Flesh from *David*, and
the Actions of his Ministry upon Earth.
St *John*, who writ after them, begins
much higher. He declares, what Je-
sus Christ was, before his Birth of
the Blessed Virgin, yea, even before
the World was made. To make
himself understood by those for whom
he intended his Gospel, St *John* cal-
leth him the *Word* before his Incar-
nation, whom after his Incarnation
he calleth with the other Evangelists,
Jesus Christ. The Name Jesus being
That imposed on him at Circumci-
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sion, and answering to our Christian Name : as the Name *Christ* belongs to him in respect of the Offices he was to exercise, after taking upon him our Nature, into which Men used under the Law, to be inaugurated by Chrisme or Anointings.

For the Title of *Word*, it is not used in the other Gospels, for ought that certainly appears ; and because of the sublime Divinity St *John* meant to teach in the use of it, he acquired with the Antient Christians the Appellation of *John* the Theologue or Divine. What Notion the generality of Readers, at this Distance from St. *John*, have of the *Word*, and how distinct it is, may justly be questioned ; but it certainly concerns those, that would read the Scriptures with Understanding and be knowing in the Mysteries of their Salvation, to study the Meaning of this Title, and the Reason of its Application to Jesus Christ. A Subject very proper for our present Meditation ; as that which will appear in the Explication, to give

before the KING.

a high Value, to the Work of our Redemption, that we meet to bless God for more particularly on this Day, and to be the Foundation of many useful Reflections, as shall be shewn in the Close of this Discourse.

But to form to our selves first, a distinct Notion of the *Word*, it will be sufficient to enquire,

I. Whence St. *John* took the Use of this Title.

II. What they probably intended by it, who introduced it into use with the People.

III. How aptly St. *John's* Design is served by it, which is to declare Christ's high Original, with those for whose Benefit he writ his Gospel.

I. Whence did St. *John* take the Use of this Title? I answer, in one Word, from the *Jews*, among whom he

he lived and was bred. John was by Education a Fisherman, the Son of a Fisherman, and consequently out of the Way of Acquaintance with the Philosophy of the Gentiles, or the abstruse Learning of the Jewish Doctors. All his Knowledge in Religion came from the Synagogue Worship, which he frequented, till Christ choosing him into the Apostleship, gave him afterwards Knowledge from on High.

Such Knowledge, he had Power with the other Apostles to express in the Language of any Nation, whither he should be sent to preach. But writing to his own People and in his own Tongue, the Spirit did not furnish him with new Expressions or Terms of Art; the Spirit did not make him Learned or Eloquent, who was neither, before his Influence; but so conducted him in the Choice of the Things he writ, and the Manner of Writing them, as not to let him err where he was to instruct; for the rest, he was left to his natural Abilities, whether

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whether improved or not, in enditing those Ideas that were imprinted supernaturally on his Understanding.

This seems to have been the Measure, of the Spirit's acting in the inspired Prophets of Old. And there is Reason to believe, he dealt no otherwise with St. *John*, because to have done otherwise, must have contradicted the end of his Inspiration and of his enditing the Gospel. He himself declares, *Joh. xx. 31. He writ these Things, that they might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that believing they might have Life through his Name.* Now unless he had chosen the most familiar Terms and vulgar Phrases, in proposing to them the Objects of their Belief, how could they believe, that did not understand him? His Gospel was not calculated for Philosophers and Doctors only, that He should confine himself to their Terms; it was adapted to common Capacities, after the Pattern of Christ's Preaching,
of

of which this is one Character, the *poor* have the Gospel preach't unto them.

We may therefore conclude hence, that the *Title Word*, was not peculiar to the Learned of that Age; for then the common People, without some Explication of it, had need of a like Inspiration to that of St. *John*, to understand his Meaning. And since St. *John* hath no where in his Books given such an Explication, it may be presumed he omitted it, because it was one of their own Terms, of which they had in that Age, a settled Notion. What that was, and whence derived, is the Subject of our *Second Enquiry*. And here I shall not trouble you, with the several Opinions of the Learned about it's Signification. That which seems to me certain is this; the *Title Word* is intended to denote a *Person*, by or through whom all the Manifestations of God are made to Creatures; whether in Works that bespeak the Divinity of the Operator, as those of Creation,

tion, Providence, Miracles, and extraordinary Deliverances disproportion'd to the natural Causes; or convey'd by glorious and sensible Appearances, by Sound and Voice, by inward Representation or Presence with the Mind, or by what other Way reasonable and sensible Beings come to any Knowledge of the invisible God. Not that he acts without subordinate Ministers, that assist in the Accomplishment of those Things, whereby God is manifested. But the Power of every such Agent, is from and under him. He presides in, he hath the Direction of the whole Work from the Beginning to the End, which is therefore justly ascrib'd to him. Agreeably to that Passage in the Gospel, *No one hath seen God at any Time, the only Begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.* Joh. i. 18.

To such a one, the Title of *Word* is applyed figuratively; the Figure being translated from the Design and Effect of a Man's Word, to imply

some such Likeness of Office in *Him*, by whom God, his Attributes, Councils, Decrees and Actions are declared. A Man's Word is the Representation of his Conceptions, and his Speech the Interpreter of his Thoughts. He [therefore] who answers the Ule of Speech to God the Father of all Things, who reveals to our Capacities, *the blessed and only Potentate, dwelling in the Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no one hath seen, nor can see*, without Him, may with great Propriety be called God's *Word*, his Speech or Interpreter.

1 Ti. vi.
15, 16.

This Similitude taken from a Word spoken, best answers the Import of the *Hebrew* and *Chaldee* Name, of which the Greek *Logos* is the Interpretation. *Logos* in Greek signifies indeed *Reason*, as well as *Speech*, but the *Hebrew* and *Chaldee* Name, hath no such double Sense; it hath but one simple Meaning, which is derived from *Speaking*. In this Sense,
Philo

Philo a Greek Jew before Christ, sometimes calls the Angels *Words*, because on less Occasions the Messenger's of God's Will. In this Sense, *Plato* a learned Gentile, who is thought to converse with the Jews some Centuries before *Philo*, calls the Divine Impressions on the Works of Nature, *Words*, as speaking the Reason of the Creator. So the Gentile Theology made *Hermes* or *Mercury*, who was also called *Logos* in *Egypt*, to be the general Interpreter of God, or *Jupiter*. But what is most to our Purpose, so the *Psalmist*, long before them all, understood the *Word*; for thus he explains it, according to his Way of making the latter Clause in a Sentence exegetick of the former, *Ps.* xxxiii, 6. By the *Word* of the Lord were the *Heavens* made, and all the Hosts of them by the *Breath* of his Mouth. The same Sense is countenanced by the antient *Syriac* Version of *St. John*, Milra d'uſu
p'ma by the Uses ascribed to *Orpheus*, and even by *St. Paul*, who speaking of
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the Creation ascribed to the *Logos*, change that into a synonymous Word that signifies Speech pronounced.

Yet doth not this Sense wholly exclude, but rather suppose the other significations given of the *Word*, namely, that of Reason and Wisdom, tho' that Notion is certainly not intended in this Title. For what is Speech express'd in articulate Sounds with us, but inward Reason made External and Sensible? And what is Reason, but inward Speech, comparing, connecting and separating Ideas? By which we first speak to our selves, before we speak to others; the very Original of what is afterwards expressed by Bodily Organs. Upon this account the same Person, tho' in different respects, is term'd sometimes the Wisdom of God, sometimes the Power, sometimes the Word of God, in the Sacred Writings, but always in a Figure. While the *Word* lay hid and inarticulate (if we may so speak) in the Father's Bosom, to shew even then his Pre-existence and strict Union

Union with the Father, he might properly enough have been described under the Character of the *Wisdom of God*.

But with regard to the same Person's external Activity, in executing the several Parts of the Creation, that had been contrived and determined by the Father, he is term'd the *Word of God*, it being the Property of a Word to make known the Secrets of the Mind, as God's Power, Wisdom and Goodness were eminently declared in the Works of the Creation.

And thus the seeming difference between the Antient Fathers, upon this Point is easily reconciled. One saith, God was not *sermonalis a principio*, or his Word did not exist till the Creation; others say, Christ was λόγος αἰδὶς the eternal Word of the Father. They may all be understood in a sound Sense with the help of this Distinction; the *Word* as he is inward Speech, formed from the eternal Mind, was for ever with God: But as God's Agent, to display and sound forth the Wisdom

dom of God in external Works, as such he existed not till the Creation which was wrought in time; the Creation being as it were a verbal Explication, of what Reason had first silently thought, disposed and resolved within it self.

Thus much for the Design of the Figure. Still the difficulty remains, how the *Jews* came to apply this Figure to that Person, by whom God was made manifest to the World? To remove it, it may be considered, that God intending under the Christian Dispensation, a clearer Revelation of the Nature of his Son, gave some intimations thereof before-hand, in the *Jewish* Scriptures. They were indeed obscure Notices, before a fuller Explication and Application of them by the Apostles, but yet sufficient to lead those that studied the Holy Scriptures, into Reflections that prepared for the reception of a better Light.

To this purpose they observed that one certain Being, transacted all Things,
with

with the Patriarchs before, and their Fathers under the Law, in the Name of God. Sometimes he is indeed treated as an Angel or Messenger, but even then is so distinguish'd from all other Angels, in respect of Majesty, Authority and Power, or dignify'd with the incommunicable Title of *Jehova*, that they had not the least thought of his being a meer Angel; no more than they could persuade themselves, that he was God the Father, who could not send himself, and to whom in the pure Simplicity of the Divine Nature, the humane Affections and Actions ascribed to this Angel, they knew did not and could not belong. Going still backward to the first Section in *Genesis*, they observed an uncommon Emphasis laid upon the Expression, *he said* or *spoke*.

Moses describing there the beginning of the Creation, introduces every Days Work with, *and God saith* let this or that be done, and it was done. From whence they inferred, (how exactly

ly. I now dispute not) that as God made all Things by his *Word*, so this *Word* was an active intelligent Being, and was the proper Title of that Divine Person, who so often afterwards sustained the Person and Character of God, in the History of the Old Testament. Here only in this Chapter tis this Form of Speech used, and that precisely before the Work of every Day, as if designedly preferred, for the suggesting of some Mystery to attentive Readers.

Be the Design of the Writer as it will, 'tis plain the Sacred Writers after *Moses* adopt this Notion, as from him. So *David* in a Psalm that celebrates the Creation, sings, *Pf. xxxiii. 6. By the WORD of the Lord were the Heavens made, &c.* And carrying the same Notion in his Thoughts, he applys the Title of *Word*, to that Person's Transactions with *Joseph*, both to his Slavery and Advancement, whom *Moses* in his Narration of it, calleth *God*. You read it in *Pf. cv. 17, 19. He sent a Man before them, even*

Gen. xlv.
5, 7, 8, 9.

even Joseph who was sold for a Bond-servant—until the time that his Word came, the Word of the Lord tried him.

Since therefore the Colledges of ^{1 Pet. 10,} Prophets searched diligently into the ^{11.} meaning of the Prophetical Books before their Time, why may not this be part of the mystical Meanings contain'd in those Books, with the Discovery whereof God blessed their Labours, before the Gift of Prophecy, able to correct dangerous Mistakes, had ceased in their Nation? From them these Notions passing by Tradition, found easily a Place in their Targums or publick Interpretations of Scripture, after the Captivity: as during their several Dispersions and Travels, by them the Gentiles came acquainted with the Notion of the Word. Which is a far more rational Account, of the means whereby Plato and other Gentile Greek Writers came, to the Knowledge of the Word, than supposing they collected it, purely by their Reason,

son, without any Foundation so to do.

However the Notion crept in among the Jews, it is certain they had such a Notion; their Targums, read in the Synagogues before Christ, are full of it, the Remains we have of the Jewish Writings in Greek bear Witness to it, St. *John* plainly supposes it to be a current Notion among his Country-Men, and even some of the *Jews* publick Prayers, before the Writing of the *Talmud*, retain a taste of it.

Thus the Notion became received, and thus it stood in the main, though darkned with cabalistical Conjectures, and philosophick Reasonings upon it, till St. *John's* Time; when being taken by him from common use and applyed to Christ, do's aptly suit his Design, of declaring Christ's high Original, to those for whose Benefit he writ his Gospel, as I am to shew under the

Third Head. For whether he writ to convince the *Jews*, that this Jesus, whom they crucified, was indeed the Son

Son of God, or to silence some Heretick Christians, who amused themselves and others, with various and absurd Genealogies in the fulness of the God-head, St. *John* could not have chosen a Term of more Significance to that End, than this of the *Word*.

Against the *Jews*, who would not hear, that Jesus was the *Son of God*, St. *John* sheweth that Jesus was first the *Word*, and as such existed, before the Creation with God; that the *Word* in respect of his peculiar Generation from the Father, was the Son of God; and therefore the *Word* being made *Flesh* and become that Person to whom the Name *Jesus* was given, Jesus also was the only-begotten of the Father. As if he had said, "I appeal to your own Notions concerning the *Word*. Your Expositors teach that God created all things by his *Word*, that he appeared and talked to *Adam* and the antediluvian Patriarchs, by his *Word*, as he

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" did

A SERMON preach'd

“ did afterwards by the same *Word*
 “ to *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob* and his
 “ Sons: That the *Word* was the *An-*
 “ gel in the *Bush*, which *Moses* beheld
 “ on Fire, that the *Word* gave the
 “ *Law*, delivered *Israel* out of *Egypt*,
 “ and was Captain over *Joshua*, and
 “ so forth. Why then may not God
 “ speak to you also in these last Days
 “ by his *Word* incarnate, as you sup-
 “ pose he acted, appeared and spoke
 “ to them in Times past by his *Word*
 “ in other Forms? So it is in Fact, In
 “ the Beginning was the *Word*, and
 “ the *Word* was with God, and the
 “ *Word* was God, all things were made
 “ by Him.---- He came unto his own, (the
 “ Jewish Nation) and his own received
 “ him not--- And the *Word* was made
 “ *Flesh*, and dwelt among us, and we be-
 “ held his Glory, the Glory as of the
 “ only Begotten of the Father. By this
 “ you see the Harmony between the
 “ old and new Creation: He that was
 “ the Beginner of the Old, is the
 “ Author of the New, that in
 “ Things he may have the Preeminence

“ He that manifested many Divine Attri-
 “ butes in making the World, discovereth
 “ more in the renewing of Man; in both
 “ he is the Proclaimer of God’s Titles,
 “ wherefore you ought to discern the Incar-
 “ nation of a Divine Person, when I say the
 “ *Word was made Flesh.*

For those Hereticks, that are said in his
 Time, to fancy various and absurd Genea-
 logies in the Deity, and therefore to place the
Word as an Emanation remote from the Fa-
 ther, and unknown to him, to be begotten
 of Silence, in Time, and a separate Subsistence
 from Christ, and Life, and Light, hear how
 aptly his Text is addrest to Silence these al-
 so. *In the Beginning was the Word, and the*
Word was with God, and the Word was God;
all things were made by Him, and without
him was not any thing made that was made:
In him was Life, and the Life was the Light
of Men, &c. And the Word was made Flesh
and dwelt among us, &c. i. e. Before the
 World or any Thing in it, before any Crea-
 ture did exist, the *Word* was with the Fa-
 ther, therefore as near and intimate with
 the Father, as can possibly be conceived;
 therefore deriving immediately from the
 Father, there being nothing between them,
 and that for ever. This is he who in Time
 was made *Flesh*, and is called *Jesus* and
Christ, as he is indeed the Fountain of Life
 and Light to every Being that partakes
 of either. This is he whom we call the
 Son

Son of God; and that you may not apprehend any thing Corporeal after the manner of Men, to be included in this way of speaking, but a Relation in a Sense worthy of God, we represent him under the Title of *Word*. There is here no occasion of your *αἰτια* with which your genealogical Tables are filled; nor any cause of Imperfection, by reason of a distant separate descent from the first Principle. When the Word is emitted from the Mind, it is the true Image of it, it retains still Union with and Dependence upon the Father of it. And therefore conceive nothing but Likeness, Perfection, Purity, Oneness and Dignity in Christ's Sonship, thus signified in the most Spiritual humane Figure, that has been yet invented to express it by.

The Doctrine that results from the Text so explained, is this, the Son of God, who before the World was hid in the Bosom of the Father, whose Divine Power was manifested in making the World, as was his Person afterwards in many Instances of care over his People, in order to redeem Man, was at length born of a Woman, and made in all Things like to those he came to redeem, Sin only excepted,

All this is plainly deducible from the Words of my Text. *Word* and *Flesh* are here opposed, as *Father* and *Flesh*, Matth. xvi. 17. *Flesh and Blood hath not revealed this,--but my Father which is in Heaven.* As Son
of

of God and Flesh, Rom. i. 3, 4. *Made of the Seed of David, according to the Flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, as Spirit and Flesh are* 1 Pet. iii. 18. *Being put to Death in the Flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.* Christ first existed as the *Word*, before he assumed humane Nature or Flesh. For it *was, the Word that was made Flesh*, and not the contrary, the Flesh was made the Word, or was exalted into the Dignity and Majesty of God. And since St Paul speaking of the Creation, saith in one Place, *God by his Son made the Worlds:* and in another, *the Worlds were framed by the Word of God.* It follows, in respect of that Nature, in which Christ pre-existed as the *Word*, he is the Son of God. Heb. i. 2.
Heb. xi 2.

From this Doctrine, now cleared, we may reflect on three Things by way of Application, which we can't do so well on the Foot of any other Explication, of Christ's being made Flesh.

1. On the great Malignity of Sin. 2. The Lowness of Christ's Abasement for our Sakes. 3. The exceeding great Love of God to Mankind in Christ's Incarnation. From whence will follow, 4thly. The Obligation we are under to love him again.

(1.) From the Incarnation of the *Word*, we may judge of the great Malignity of Sin. If we may pronounce of the Distemper by the difficult Method of Cure, no Disease is more desperate

desperate than Sin. 'Twas Sin, that brought down the Son of God from Heaven, the Regions of eternal Light, to our Earth, the Place of Darkness. 'Twas Sin, that made him take the Form of a Servant, who was before in the Form of God; and when found in the Fashion of a Man, delivered him over to Death, even the Death of the Cross. For Himself he had nothing to answer; he was without Spot and Blemish. But all the World beside stood charged in God's sight, and he undertook to make their Atonement, *to redeem them from the Curse of the Law, by being made a Curse for them; to be the Lamb that should take away the Sin of the World,* and by Death to deliver from Death, which all Mankind was become obnoxious to.

To need such a Priest, and such a Sacrifice, demonstrates their Condition to be very deplorable. God would not have used such extraordinary Means, if less might suffice. If the Law could have given Life, verily Righteousness had been by the Law. If Perfection could have been obtain'd by the Levitical Priesthood, there had been no further need of another Priest after the Order of *Melchizedek*. If it had been possible for the Blood of Bulls and of Goats to take away Sin, God had not prepared Christ a Body, to fulfill his Will in. All these being *weak and unprofitable*, (not proportioned to so great Ends,) God sent forth
his

his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to make us free from the Law of Sin and Death; and by a *Sacrifice for Sin* to Rom. viii. 3. *condemn Sin in the Flesh.*

It is not for us, short-sighted Mortals to say, what God might or could do for the Pardon and Abolition of Sin, in any other Way. It is enough, that he hath *chosen* no other beside this of his Son's being made Flesh, whereby to redeem us: that he hath told us, this is the *only*, the *last* Sacrifice for Sin: and that there remains no other for them, that take no hold of this, by repentance. Heavy therefore must be the Burthen of their Sins; inexcusable their Guilt, insupportable their Misery, who forfeit the Benefit of this Redeemer, and despise or neglect Christ's great Salvation!

(2) We may hence admire, the lowness of Christ's Abasement in becoming Man. This first Act of Christ, his submitting to be made Flesh, is often mentioned in Scripture, as a considerable instance of his Humiliation: which it is hard to conceive, wherein it lies, if he were not before possessor of Being and Honour and Dignity in some Pre-existent State: which there is no Reason to prefer so highly above the condescension of Angels in their Administrations towards Men so much lower than they, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* doth; if he were not Superior to all the Angelick Beings, if he had not *by Inheritance a more excellent Name than they*; if as

a Son, he were not intitl'd to the *Throne* and Scepter of his Father.

Was he born a meer Man, like one of us, wherein did his Abasement exceed ours? To be brought into Being from nothing, must have been a Benefit to him as well as others: or a Degradation to other Men as well as to him. Nor could he plead the merit of Choice above others, were he not in a prior Capacity, to refuse what he undertook.

But granting him to have existed in fulness of Majesty, as the Word with God, and yet foregoing this willingly, to take upon him the Nature of Man, you then perceive the Force of the sacred Expressions concerning it.

2 Cor. viii. 9. *You know, saith the Apostle, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho' he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you thro' his Poverty might be rich.* At what time was he rich, and in what? Not during his Life upon Earth. He declares the contrary: He had not where to lay his Head; and sometimes was put to the expence of a Miracle, to satisfy his Hunger. In such Circumstances, he parted not with much, that resigned a miserable Life, which Nature one time or other would require. And for Riches in spiritual Gifts, these for our sakes he was *filled with* on Earth, not *deprived of*, and he exercised them more amply, the nearer he approach'd to his End.

They were therefore the Riches of Glory and Dignity that he enjoyed, before his Birth
and

and quitted to become Man, which the Apostle means; even that Glory Christ prays for just before his Passion, *Joh. xvii. 5. And now, O Father, glorifie me with thy own Self, with the Glory which I had with thee, before the World was.* The same Apostle therefore is careful to distinguish *this*, from the *still lower Act* of Abasement, his submitting to a violent Death upon the Cross, after he was made Man. Observe his Gradation. *Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. Who being in the Form of God—made himself of no Reputation* (or as the Greek Word implies, emptied or divested himself thereof,) *and took upon himself the Form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Men.* Here indeed was a mighty diminution from the Form of God, to the Form of a Servant, which all assume that are made in the likeness of Men. And yet this was not all, *being found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself further, and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross.* As surely therefore as he dyed, so surely he became true Man; and he was as surely first in the Form of God, as he was afterwards in the Form of Man (you must understand both States of a Reality of Being, or both of an empty Appearance :) and greater Humiliation can't be conceived, than to descend from a State so high, to another so opposite.

(3) On this Hypothesis, the Love of God in Man's Redemption is exceedingly magni-

fied, and on no other so much. For tho' the Demerits and dismal Consequences of Sin, endear the Blessing of a Deliverance by any Hand; and when the first Motion proceeds from the Person offended, the Grace is still enhanced: Yet if the Dignity of the Person that accomplish'd the Deliverance be also added, the Consideration thereof exceedingly encreases the Value of it.

It had been a mighty Honour to Men, made lower than the Angels, if God had employed any of the Angels that stand before his Presence, on the Errand of Man's Salvation. But God passed over them, to send his only-begotten Son, the Heir of all things, to save us.

And how did he come? Not as the Son of so great a KING, encircled with Glory, attended by *Myriads* of Heavenly Beings his Ministers; no, nor in the Grandeur of a Temporal King, that claimed the Throne of his Father *David*. He did not so much as appear a perfect Man, at first, as *Adam* came out of God's Hands, but submitted to be born a common Man, in the ordinary and leisurely Process of Nature, to take upon him our Flesh.

Flesh, our vilest Part, the Seat of Want and Infirmary, of Pain and Corruption, the Subject of Appetites and Passions. In such a homely Tabernacle, he spent many Years: He laboured, he fasted, he hungered. he grieved, he suffered Torments, and at length
he

he dyed. *Lord! we may say with the Centurion, We were not worthy, that thou shouldest come under our Roof!* It had been a Degree of *Love* beyond Expectation, if thou hadst vouchsafed, like a *Man in Authority*, but to speak a Word in our Behalf; but since thou was not ashamed to visit our Nature, and to call us Brethren, we are astonisht at the Riches of thy Goodness. What could have been done more, that thou hast not done, to constrain ingenuous Natures, to a suitable Resentment of thy Kindness?

On the contrary, every Step that the Nature of Christ is lowered and degraded, is an Abatement to this Expression of his Love. The fewer Rights he had antecedently to his Birth the less he quitted for our Sakes; and the less he quitted, the smaller Obligations he has laid upon us.

The Apostles therefore, to exalt our Sense of the Benefit, do often mention the high Original of our Redeemer, and his near Relation to the Father. *In this, saith, St. John was manifested the Love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live thro' him. Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins.* The Titles of Son and only begotten Son, suppose something very peculiar in Christ above all other Beings. And what that was, the same St. John tells, just after the

the Words of my Text, he was the *Word* made Flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld his Glory, as of the *only begotten of the Father*

From this Relation *to God*, his Blood is called by another Apostle, the *precious Blood* of Christ, 1 *Pet.* i. 19. Why more precious than another Man's, but that it was offered *thru' the eternal Spirit* without Spot to God; as the Author to the *Hebrews* has it, it received Virtue from that Holy Nature, he existed in, before the World was, which made the Offering up of the Body of Christ, far exceed all other Sacrifices, that were also of God's Appointment. *And therefore hereby perceive we the Love of God toward us.*

Such Love calls on us, (*4thly.*) To ask ourselves, what we shall return to the Lord for all this. What shall we render? What have we to render but Love in return? Love of him again is all that is left us of our own. God hath many Titles, to whatever we can do besides. In Right of Creation, all the Service we are able to pay, is his. Further, He hath bought us with a Price, to glorify him both in Soul and Body, which are his. However there may be a ready Will, even under prior Engagements. We may express in a cheerful free choice to obey his Commands, and in the Pleasure wherewith we transcribe into our Manners what is most eminent in Christ's Example, that were we entirely our own, we would devote our selves wholly to him. And

And there are two Things in Christ's Example, which the Return of this Day's Solemnity, more especially reminds us of, *viz.* Humility and Love of the Brethren. As often as we think of Christ's low Condescension, we should make the same inference from it with St. Paul. *Let the same mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus, who being in the Form of God, did not make Ostentation of his real Dignity, nor pertinaciously insist on this Right, but was content to be degraded and contumeliously treated for the Good of others.*

Love of the Brethren is another Virtue St John recommends from the Instance of Christ's Love. *Beloved, saith he, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* And again, 1 Joh iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he (Christ) laid down his Life for us. And, or therefore, we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.*

How far short do they fall of this, who will not lay aside their Passions of Malice and Hatred and Envy against their Brethren? No, nor so much as a few Superfluities out of their Plenty, to save the Lives of their poor and miserable Brethren! Of such is the same Apostles Question; *Whoso hath this World's Good, and sees his Brother hath need, and shuts up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?* And again, *If we love not our Brother whom we have seen, how shall we love God whom we have not seen?* How can they celebrate
this

this Feast of *Christmas*, who have not purged away the Leaven of Uncharitableness, of Malice and Wickedness? If you would walk in Love as Christ hath loved us, you must fulfill St Paul's Precepts, Eph. iv. 31. To put away all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and evil speaking, and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us.

Then shall our Sacrifice of Praise to God at the Holy Table, be a sweet Smelling Savor; then shall we be worthy to shew forth the Lord's Death till he come; and have reason to be assured, that Christ will perfect his Love towards us, and love us to the End. Bringing forth such Fruits, we may with Joy look for his Second Appearance from Heaven, whence he shall come again and receive us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also, in the Regions of Love and Peace and Bliss, for evermore.

F I N I S.

A Sermon preach'd at the Cathedral-Church of Worcester, on the 7th of June, 1716. Being the Day of Thanksgiving for the Blessing of God, &c. in suppressing the late Unnatural Rebellion. By E. CHANDLER, D. D. (now Lord Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield.)

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